

NEW RULES, NEW RIDERS, NEW CLASSES, NEW EVERYTHING...!

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EnduroGP 2017

A RUST Guide

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CLASS WARS

EDITORIAL

THE TIMES THEY are a changin'. For 2017, the world enduro championship will undergo a huge change, the biggest since its inception in 1990. And this latest format revision has caused a stir in the paddock and left everyone on edge, worried about how it will all turn out.

So **RUST** takes a look at exactly what this year will have in store. Make or break, this season – starting on March 25 in Finland – looks set to be pivotal for world enduro as we know it.

A gate start in enduro?
Yes! And expect to see more of them in the future...



RUST EnduroGP Special



EnduroGP isn't just about a name change, now there's been a comprehensive class restructure...

Words: Georgia Wells

IN THE SPACE of just a few years the world enduro championship has been reinvented and renamed, changing from WEC to EWC to EnduroGP. But all of these rebranding attempts have been largely superficial, affecting little except everyone's (*in*)ability to use the right stickers, the current hashtags, and the correct terminology.

Last year the championship saw the addition of an extra class, named after the series itself: EnduroGP. This 'scratch' (overall) category ran alongside E1, E2, and E3 (which were first instituted in 2004) and so saw the crowning of an extra champion: the rider who performed best out of all three classes.

It gave the riders extra motivation to push harder at races, and something huge to aim for. By the end of the season, in France, the change had been hailed a roaring success. But as the EnduroGP champion, Sherco's Matt Phillips, accepted his trophy at the awards ceremony, he had the unique honour of becoming the first and last EnduroGP champion.

Matt Phillips



CLASS WARS





A little history

CHANGES TO THE class structure is nothing new. Back in the 1990s for instance, there were six main classes, which ranged from 80cc all the way up to 500cc (*with sub-dissection allowing for two-strokes and four-strokes*). And for several years in the early noughties the classes were merely named after the capacity they included: 125, 250, 350 etc. In 2004, as a new series promoter came in and the championship began being broadcast around the world, in an effort to make the discipline more accessible to casual spectators the familiar E1, E2, E3 format was introduced (*which, incidentally, mirrored the new classes in world motocross: MX1, MX2 and MX3*). Three all-new classes have since been added: EJ (*Juniors*) in 2005, EY (*Youth*) in 2008, and EW (*Women*) in 2010.





Will EnduroGP WORK?

Change is always unsettling, and we can never know if things will turn out for the better or come crashing down around our ears. Just two quick views on the topic here:

Yamaha Europe's Director of Enduro and Rally, Alexandre Kowalski: *"In elite level sport there should only be one champion. While we might like to reward several people for their hard work, there should only be one supreme champion at the end of the year, like in MotoGP!"*

A well-respected paddock member, who has been on the scene for 42 years, speaking anonymously: *"It'll be the death of World Enduro within two years!"*



The class of 2017

SO, WHILE EJ, EY, and EW remain untouched. E1, E2, E3 have gone. In their place there are just two classes – EnduroGP and Enduro2.

EnduroGP is no longer a scratch class, but the class for bikes bigger than 250cc, two-stroke or four-stroke.

Enduro 2 (*not to be confused with E2*) is for any bike up to 250cc, two-stroke or four-stroke. There are no age limits for these two classes, and no other restrictions.

The hope, of series promoter ABC Communications and the sport's governing body the FIM, is the changes will help popularise the sport. Note that again, in these changes there's a sense of trying to rationalize the class structures, across motorcycle sport, so EnduroGP and Enduro2 mirror Motocross' latest MX1 and MX2 arrangement and indeed MotoGP and Moto2...





LONGER, BIGGER and more varied!

For 2017 EnduroGP will feature new formats
and an extended season...

A longer season

Whereas in some recent years the championship has been a bit abbreviated, for 2017 there's a full season of events starting in March and ending in October, with a little summer break in the middle – where there's an option for the riders to take up places in the annual ISDE. There's even a mad dash down to South America and back for a round late in the year – sure to create a few logistical headaches (*not to mention DNSs for those riders/teams on tighter budgets*).

The longer season at least falls within our expectations of a world championship season, and the spread of dates could be less damaging to a rider who might get injured – allowing a better chance of recovery before the next round. Before, looking at the example of the back-to-back fixtures at the Iberian rounds, a rider injured on day one (*effectively of four*) could as good as write off his championship hopes right there and then, given three ensuing DNSs...

New formats

The big news, though, is the introduction of new race formats. There'll be an American style GNCC (*cross-country*) and Euro-style Sprint race for the British GP at Hawkstone Park, while the season kicks off with a rally style race for the GP of Finland (*in snow!*). This is quite a departure from the standard formats, but it's worth noting we're just talking for two fixtures from a nine round series, so you sense there's some dipping of toes in the water here.

EnduroGP 2017 Calendar.

- 25-26 March - GP of FINLAND**, Lake Paijanne. Enduro Rally.
- 21-23 April - GP of SPAIN**, Puerto Lumbreras. Standard Enduro.
- 26-28 May - GP of ITALY**, Spoleto. Standard Enduro.
- 23-25 June - GP of HUNGARY**, Paradfurdo. Standard Enduro.
- 01-02 July - GP of SLOVAKIA**, Puchov. Standard Enduro.
- 21-23 July - GP of PORTUGAL**, Castelo Branco. Standard Enduro.
- 23-24 September - GP of GREAT BRITAIN**, Hawkstone Park. Sprint & GNCC.
- 07-08 October - GP of ARGENTINA**, Tucuman. Standard Enduro.
- 20-22 October - GP of GERMANY**, Zschopau. Standard Enduro.





A Snow rally?

.....

THE RALLY ROUND in the likely snows of Finland will certainly create some fun and games. Certainly, the relentless rally format of the race has caused headaches for everyone. The run around Southern Finland's legendary Lake Paijanne will see the riders tackle 15-20 tests in one day, in temperatures as low as -14°C (*anything below -15°C will see the cancellation of the race*). The long, unseen, tests and the lengthy and tricky liaisons will make keeping up with the race almost impossible for teams, followers, and fans. Riders will need to change their spiked tyres often – and will need to change their clothes between every test or risk hypothermia on the road sections. As well, the race begins in one town and ends 140km away in the nation's capital.

The budgets the teams have had to put forward for additional training programmes, winter riding gear, specialist foods and drink, and extra staff to keep up with the riders on the route (*which spans several hundred kilometres*) has made the opening round of the season very controversial indeed.





RUST EnduroGP Special

Who's Who of EnduroGP

Entry list. EnduroGP

KTM Factory Racing:

Nathan Watson - Great Britain - 350EXC-F 4T

Christophe Nambotin - France - 300EXC 2T

Rockstar Husqvarna Factory:

Mathias Bellino - France - TE300 2T

Christophe Charlier - France - FE450 4T

Sherco Factory Racing:

Matthew Phillips - Australia - 300SE-R 4T

Beta Factory Racing:

Steve Holcombe - Great Britain - 300RR 2T

Alex Salvini - Italy - 350RR4T

Beta Boano:

Deny Philippaerts - Italy - 300RR 2T

Tommaso Montanari - Italy - 300RR 2T

Honda RedMoto Factory Racing:

Giacomo Redondi - Italy - CRF450R 4T

GasGas Factory:

Antoine Basset - France - EC300 2T

Yamaha Outsiders Factory:

Loic Larrieu - France - WR450F 4T

Pont Grup Yamaha:

Cristobal Guerrero - Spain - WR450F 4T

KTM Spain:

Jaume Betriu - Spain - 300EXC 2T



RUST's Form Guide

Matthew Phillips (AUS - Sherco):

The laid-back Tasmanian won last year's inaugural EnduroGP title emphatically, also taking top honours in the E2 class, which makes him a four-time world champion at the age of 23. Matt's versatility coupled with his calm approach to every situation and the fact that he stays with the 'family' team he adores, makes him a very strong candidate for the crown.





RUST EnduroGP Special

Mathias Bellino (FRA - Husqvarna):

The polar opposite of Phillips, highly-strung Frenchman Mathias Bellino wears his heart on his sleeve and has been known to get worked-up under pressure. That being said, Bellino is often unjustly overlooked; he has been one of the most promising talents of recent years and the 2012 Junior and 2015 E3 champion finished as runner-up in EnduroGP last year. He and his Rockstar Energy Husqvarna will be ready to come out fighting.





Steve Holcombe (GB - Beta):

Beta will be placing high hopes on Steve Holcombe for 2017 after the young Brit rode superbly throughout 2016; Steve was E3 champion and stayed in contention for EnduroGP honours until the final round. He is completely unfazed by competing against riders who were his heroes just a few years ago, and there is no doubt that he'll be one of the favourites in 2017.





RUST EnduroGP Special

Nathan Watson (GB - KTM):

Fellow Brit Nathan Watson became one of the fastest learners ever witnessed in World Enduro when he stormed onto the scene last year. The former motocross rider adapted to enduro effortlessly and with plenty of style, and was just 9 points away from E1 glory. Ever-smiling and with a sunny disposition, Watson will be hoping to take some more scalps in his second year in the sport.





RUST EnduroGP Special



Christophe Charlier (FRA - Husqvarna):

Husqvarna's newest signing will hope to follow in Watson's footsteps as he also joins enduro from motocross. If he's able to adapt to the different formats and terrains on this year's calendar he is sure to surprise many with his aggressive style and impressive results.



Charlier has picked the FE350 - interesting choice Christophe!





RUST EnduroGP Special

Loic Larrieu (FRA - Yamaha):

Perhaps not the most obvious candidate for champion, Larrieu's shy demeanour belies his pace. The Frenchman, and his factory Yamaha squad, will be expecting nothing less than wins – especially as he finished 3rd in the tough E2 class last year.



Factory 450F for Larrieu - a proper powerhouse!



RUST EnduroGP Special

Giacomo Redondi (ITA - Honda):

Paddock wildchild Giacomo Redondi has matured since finally winning the Junior title last season and Honda are certain of his credentials. He has already been beating the likes of Alex Salvini in the Italian Championship this season and he won't be content without doing the same in EnduroGP.





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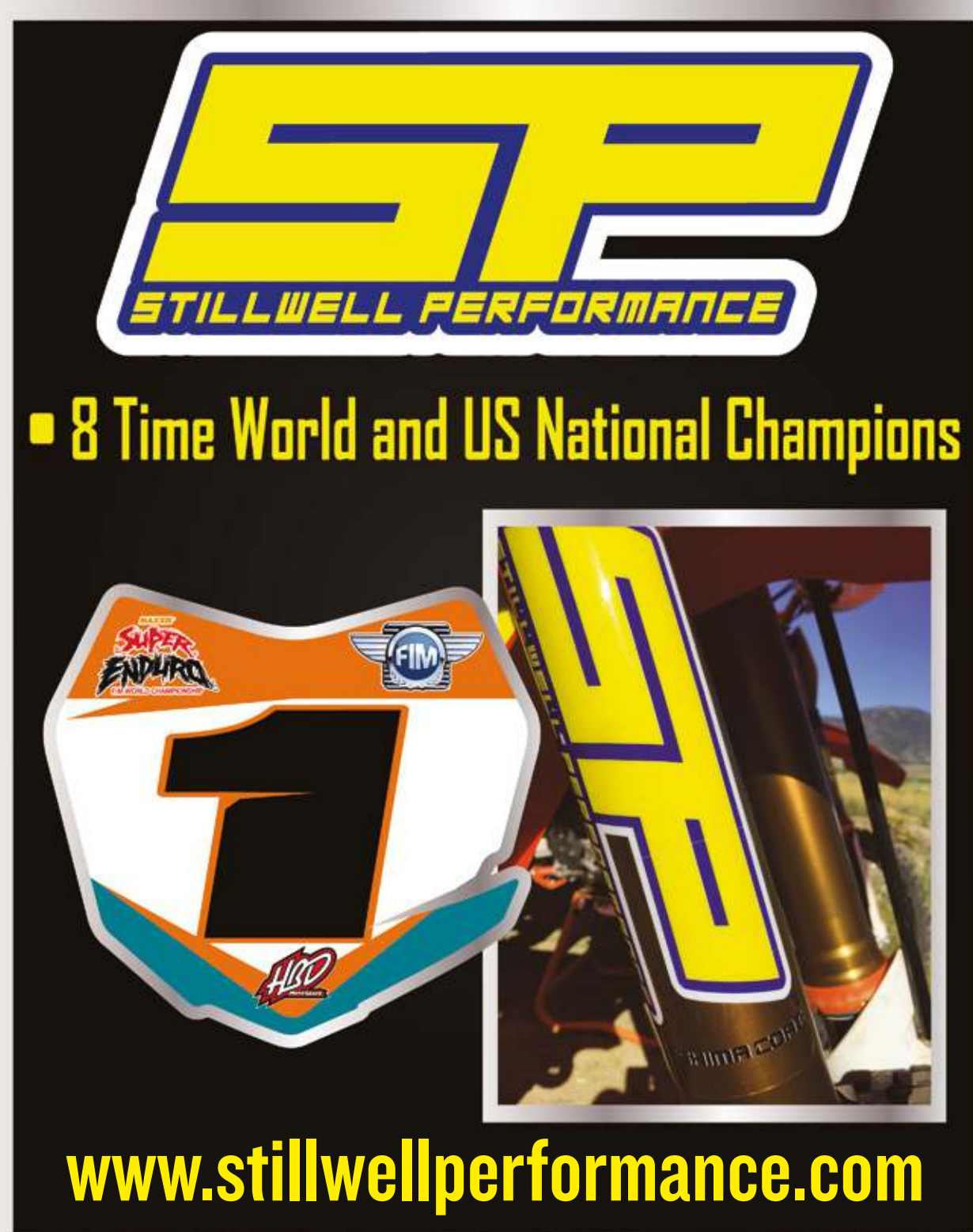
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Who's Who of Enduro 2

Entry list. Enduro 2

KTM Factory Racing:

Daniel Sanders - *Australia* - 250EXC 2T.

Josep Garcia - *Spain* - 250EXC-F 4T.

KTM Factory Support:

Rudy Moroni - *Italy* - 250EXC-F 4T.

Rockstar Husqvarna Factory:

Daniel McCanney - *Great Britain* - 250TE 2T.

Pascal Rauchenecker - *Austria* - 250FE 4T.

TM Factory Racing:

Eero Remes - *Finland* - EN250Fi 4T.

Manuel Monni - *Italy* - EN250 2T.

TM Factory Support:

Josh Gotts - *Great Britain* - EN250 2T

Yamaha Outsiders Factory:

Jamie McCanney - *Great Britain* - WR250F 4T

Beta Factory Racing:

Jeremy Joly - *France* - 250RR 2T

Honda RedMoto Factory Racing:

Davide Guarneri - *Italy* - CRF250R 4T

Sherco Factory Racing:

Lorenzo Santolino - *Spain* - 250SEF-R 4T

GasGas Factory:

Jonathan Barragan - *Spain* - EC250 2T

Kawasaki KE Moto:

Alessandro Battig - *Italy* - KXF250 4T

Lunigiana Suzuki:

Gianluca Martini - *Italy* - 250RMZ 4T

Pont Grup Yamaha:

Victor Guerrero - *Spain* - WR250F 4T

Husqvarna BBM:

Thomas Oldrati - *Italy* - 250TE 2T

Yamaha Privateer:

Roman Dumontier - *France* - WR250F 4T

Yamaha Privateer:

Tommy Sjostrom - *Sweden* - WR250F 4T

RUST's Form Guide

Eero Remes (FIN - TM):

Diminutive Finn Eero Remes is the obvious favourite for the title as he stays with his treasured 250. He will be quietly determined to add an Enduro 2 title to his back-to-back E1 crowns. Without mistakes he will certainly be hard to beat.



Manuel Monni (ITA - TM):

Remes' team-mate may seem like an odd choice for the 'favourites' section, but if he can bring his Italian championship form to the world stage then he'll be hot on the heels of the reigning champ.





RUST EnduroGP Special



Josep Garcia (SPA - KTM):

"Though he be but little, he is fierce". KTM's latest star, Garcia has been on the radar since his full-time debut in 2014. If the 19 year old can stay injury-free he will take his on-the-limit riding style to the class's more established riders every weekend.





Daniel McCanney (GB - Husqvarna):

Anyone who has followed enduro in recent years will know just how determined and dependable the Manxman is. A former EJ world and SuperEnduro world champion he will likely boast the most consistent results at the end of the year, and that could bode very well for Danny.





RUST EnduroGP Special

Pascal Rauchenecker (AUT - Husqvarna):

Austria's Pascal Rauchenecker managed to slip into world enduro virtually un-noticed last year, despite joining the Factory Husqvarna squad. And although his 2016 results were good enough to see him place 5th in E1, all eyes were on Watson. Having completed a season 'incognito', 'Rauchy' will be more than ready to prove that he's learned the tricks of the trade and can do battle with the best.





Jamie McCanney (GB - Yamaha):

The McCanney brothers will be pitted head-to-head this season and it will be enthralling to see just who comes out on top. Jamie's smooth riding style (*he's another double world champion, in EY and EJ*) will see him take his Yamaha to the podium, but staying away from injuries will be top priority for the unlucky youngster.



Full Gas!

WHATEVER THE PROS and cons of the new formats, it all kicks off this weekend, and we can expect the world's best enduro riders to come out full throttle! And actually – seeing how our enduro heroes deal with a rally – in snow – yeah, that's actually pretty interesting. Let's tune in!

For sure, world enduro is about to venture into an exciting new season, and the champions will be those best able to deal with the snows of a near-arctic winter, the summer heat in woodlands throughout Europe, not to mention the sand and the altitude of the

deserts in South America. That sounds cool, and it's certainly cool enough to have youth riders all over the world from Chile to Italy still clamouring to join the championship. And fans, young and old, should still be enamoured with world enduro and its stars. It's all change, but – to be fair – there are promising signs for the continued success of this fabulous sport.

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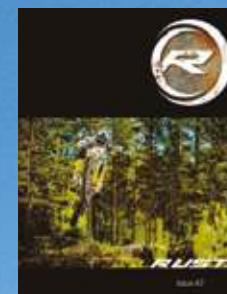
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The 2016 Beta and KTM model ranges tested. Warren visits the 2016 Motocross of Nations. Pitgirl rounds up the 2015 EWC Season. Columns from Si Melber and Rick Kemp...



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THE 2016 Husqvarna model launch. The KTM 250XC-F tested. The Suzuki V-Strom 650 and Pitgirl's analysis of the 2015 EWC Season. Columns from Chris Evans, Gary Freeman and Si Melber...



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Race test of 2015 250EXC and 2015 Husqvarna TE350 on the Grappe de Cyran. Testing the Honda CB500X Adventure. Pitgirl on beating the off-season blues and columns from JB and Gary Freeman...



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2016 ISDE from Spain, two new superlight trail-enduros from Fantic. Chris Evans In praise of the new CCM GP450 adventure bike plus products from Pirelli and Polisport...



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2017 Dakar race preview, the Wieleckis continue their search for America, Andy Dukes searches for the 'Perfect RTW Bike' and JB finds more nasty surprises on the Project TLR...



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Exclusive first ride of Touratech's BMW R1200GS Rambler!!! 3 Plucky Brits tackle the Red Bull Sea to Sky, Warren M. takes on his first road book rally, and we test 100% goggles and the 6D ATR-1 helmet...



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Is the new Sherco 300 SEF-R clubman friendly? RUST gets and exclusive ride on the Royal Enfield Himalayan, Andy Dukes gets some last-minute RTW tips, and we pick our fave clothing to keep us warm in winter...



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Hawkstone Park, the first MX of the year, JB and Warren M. do round 1 of the R3 Rally Raid Series, the long term Husky TE300 and the WR 250F updated, products tested and part one of Best Western as six trail-mad Kiwis follow the Trans Am trail...



ISSUE #24

Forza Italia, is the Italian Enduro series the best in the world? We ride the new Fantic 250E Casa 4T. Best Western Part the six Kiwis continue their trip out West... RUST Products, a selection of trick parts, tried tested and rated...

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Contact

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RUSTS SPORTS LTD

www.rustsports.com
Warwick House
The Grange
St Peter Port
Guernsey
GY1 2PX

Words: Georgia Wells

Editor: Jonathan Bentman
editor@rustsports.com

Advertsing & Industry Liaison:
Alex Waters
alex.waters@rustsports.com

Designer: Andy Riley

Photography: KTM/Husqvarna/Beta/
Sherco/Yamaha/Red Bull Content Pool –
Sebas Romero, Irina Gorodniakova,
Santiago Molina, Cristiano Morello,
Miha Stetcu, Alfredo Escobar
and Future7Media

Commercial Manager: James Linane
james.linane@rustsports.com
Managing Director: Warren Malschinger

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